

CAPSULE SUMMARY

~~BA-1069~~ B-1068

Ruby Kenton House

408 Railroad Avenue

East Towson, Baltimore County

Circa 1900

Private

The house at 408 Railroad Avenue was constructed circa 1900 in the East Towson neighborhood of Baltimore County. The history of this property dates from the purchase of one-and-a-quarter acres of land by Daniel Harris in September 1853. This is believed to be the first documented African-American landholding in Towson, and is among the oldest such ethnic enclave in Baltimore County. Further, manumitted slaves and/or descendents of former slaves, many of who were owned by Charles Ridgely, populated the neighborhood. Hampered by the low economic status of the residents, development in the 19th century was slow, increasing after the turn of the 20th century. The setting of the property, building styles, and construction materials were guided by the limited economic status of the residents and their desire to establish a neighborhood of their own without the assistance of white architects, builders, and craftsmen. Many of the current homeowners and tenants living in the neighborhood are descendents of the first African-American residents.

The Ruby Kenton House, circa 1900, is sited near Railroad Avenue on a level grassy lot amongst mature trees and shrubs. The two-and-a-half story, three-bay dwelling has a solid parged concrete block foundation supporting a wood-frame structural system clad with asphalt shingles. The off-center entry features a one-leaf multiple light wood door. The house has two windows on each full story with wood double-hung sashes and 1/1-lights set in molded wood surrounds with square sills. The one-story, three-bay front porch features a shed roof supported by square wood posts. There is a wood raking cornice and the center gable roof is covered with asphalt shingles. The front gable peak, containing a 6-light wood frame window, is clad with asbestos shingles. One interior brick chimney with a corbeled cap rises through the roof. A one-story addition with a gable roof abuts the rear elevation. One wood-frame shed, built circa 1960, is associated with the property.

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No.

BA-1068

~~BA-1069~~

1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic Ruby Kenton House
other

2. Location

street and number 408 Railroad Avenue not for publication
city, town East Towson vicinity
county Baltimore County

3. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Leroy A. Kenton, Elizabeth K. Williams, et al
street and number 408 Railroad Avenue telephone Not Available
city, town Baltimore state MD zip code 21286-5411

4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Baltimore County Courthouse tax map and parcel: 70A, 205
city, town Towson liber 6204 folio 300

5. Primary Location of Additional Data

- ☐ Contributing Resource in National Register District
☐ Contributing Resource in Local Historic District
☐ Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
☐ Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
☐ Recorded by HABS/HAER
☐ Historic Structure Report or Research Report
☐ Other

6. Classification

Category	Ownership	Current Function	Resource Count
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	Contributing Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce/trade	1 1 buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> defense	sites
<input type="checkbox"/> site		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> domestic	structures
<input type="checkbox"/> object		<input type="checkbox"/> education	objects
		<input type="checkbox"/> funerary	1 1 Total
		<input type="checkbox"/> government	
		<input type="checkbox"/> health care	
		<input type="checkbox"/> industry	
		<input type="checkbox"/> landscape	
		<input type="checkbox"/> recreation/culture	
		<input type="checkbox"/> religion	
		<input type="checkbox"/> social	
		<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
		<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	
		<input type="checkbox"/> unknown	
		<input type="checkbox"/> vacant/not in use	
		<input type="checkbox"/> other:	
			Number of Contributing Resources previously listed in the Inventory
			1

7. Description

Inventory No. ~~BA-1069~~ BA-1068

Condition

<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> altered

Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The Ruby Kenton House, circa 1900, is sited near Railroad Avenue on a level grassy lot amongst mature trees and shrubs. The two-and-a-half story, three-bay dwelling has a solid parged concrete block foundation supporting a wood-frame structural system clad with asphalt shingles. The off-center entry features a one-leaf multiple light wood door. The house has two windows on each full story with wood double-hung sashes and 1/1-lights set in molded wood surrounds with square sills. The one-story, three-bay front porch features a shed roof supported by square wood posts. There is a wood raking cornice and the center gable roof is covered with asphalt shingles. The front gable peak, containing a 6-light wood frame window, is clad with asbestos shingles. One interior brick chimney with a corbeled cap rises through the roof. A one-story addition with a gable roof abuts the rear elevation.

One wood-frame shed, built circa 1960, is associated with the property.

8. Significance

Inventory No. ~~BA-1069~~ BA-1068

Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> performing arts	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment/ recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion	
<input type="checkbox"/> 2000-	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science	
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/ settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> social history	
	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning		<input type="checkbox"/> maritime industry	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation		<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:	

Specific dates 1900 ca. **Architect/Builder** Unknown

Construction dates 1900 ca.

Evaluation for:

☐ National Register ☐ Maryland Register ☒ not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance reports, complete evaluation on a DOE Form - see manual.)

The house at 408 Railroad Avenue was constructed circa 1900 in the East Towson neighborhood of Baltimore County. East Towson is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history, specifically the pre-Civil War development of an African-American neighborhood in a predominately white community. The history of this property dates from the purchase of one-and-a-quarter acres of land by Daniel Harris in September 1853. This is believed to be the first documented African-American landholding in Towson, and is among the oldest such ethnic enclave in Baltimore County. Further, manumitted slaves and/or descendants of former slaves, many of who were owned by Charles Ridgely, populated the neighborhood. Hampered by the low economic status of the residents, development in the 19th century was slow, increasing after the turn of the 20th century. The setting of the property, building styles, and construction materials were guided by the limited economic status of the residents and their desire to establish a neighborhood of their own without the assistance of white architects, builders, and craftsmen. By 1927, the community was ninety-five percent improved with single-family dwellings, social buildings, a school, and religious structures. Many of the current homeowners and tenants living in the neighborhood are descendants of the first African-American residents.

East Towson as a whole is representative of an important phase of architectural development in Baltimore County, illustrating the dilution of popular architectural styles to more efficiently meet the needs of the neighborhood, and the builders' untrained abilities to execute the fashionable ornamentation. Thus, East Towson provided lower cost housing in a more suburban neighborhood, rather than the urban setting their economic status typically perpetuated.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Inventory No. ~~BA-1069~~ BA-1068

See continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property _____

Acreage of historical setting _____

Quadrangle name Towson

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

Verbal boundary description and justification

The Ruby Kenton House is located at 408 Railroad Avenue in the East Towson vicinity in the Ninth District of Baltimore County. It has historically been associated with tax map 70A, parcel 205.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title K. Baynard, J. Bunting & J. Riggle, Architectural Historians

organization E.H.T. Traceries

date 10/9/01

street and number 1121 5th Street NW

telephone 202/393-1199

city or town Washington

state DC zip code 20001

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
DHCD/DHCP
100 Community Place
Crownsville MD 21032
410-514-7600

Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. ^{BA-1068}
~~BA-1069~~

Name Ruby Kenton House

Continuation Sheet

Number 9 Page 1

Atlas of Baltimore County, Maryland. Philadelphia, PA: G. M. Hopkins, 1877.

Baltimore County Historic Inventory.

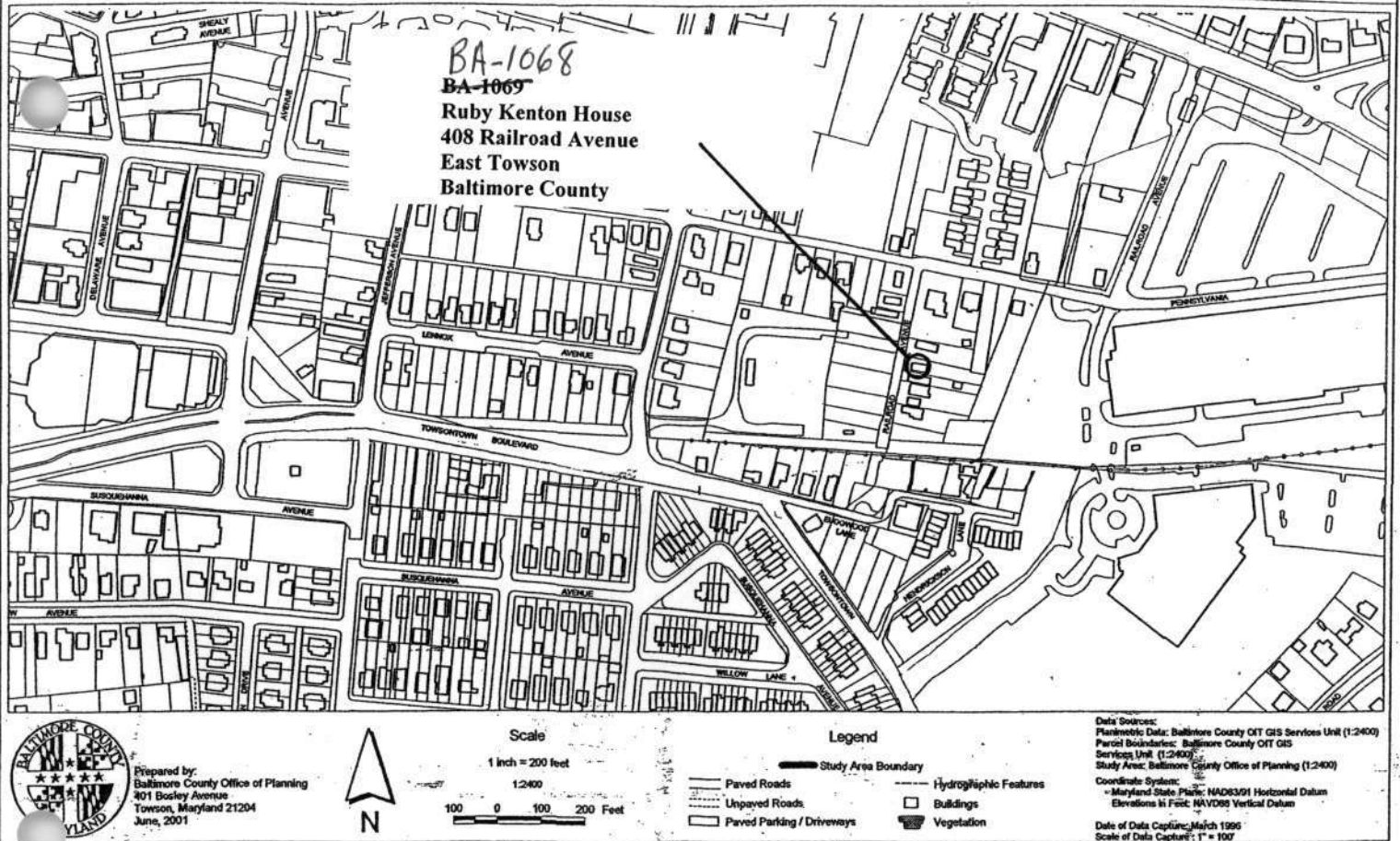
Brooks, Neal A. and Eric G. Rockel. A History of Baltimore County. Towson, MD: Friends of the Towson Library, Inc., 1979.

Map of Baltimore County. Philadelphia, PA: G. W. Bromley, 1915.

Scharf, J. Thomas. History of Baltimore City and County From the Earliest Period to the Present Day: Including Biographical Sketches of Their Representative Men. Philadelphia, PA: Louis H. Everts, 1881. Reprinted by Higginson Book Company, Salem, MA.

Sidney, J. C. Map of the City and County of Baltimore, Maryland, from Original Surveys. Baltimore, MD: James M. Stephens, 1850

East Towson: Planimetric Data





(BALTIMORE WEST)
8662 1 SW

Mapped by the Army Map Service
Edited and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS, USC&GS, USCE, and Maryland
Bureau of Control Surveys and Maps

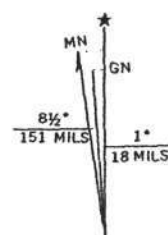
Culture and drainage in part compiled from aerial photographs
taken 1943. Topography by planetable surveys 1944
Culture revised by the Geological Survey 1957

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Maryland coordinate system
1000-metre Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 18, shown in blue

Red tint indicates areas in which only
landmark buildings are shown

Revisions shown in purple compiled by the Geological Survey from
aerial photographs taken 1966 and 1974. This information not
field checked

Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas



UTM GRID AND 1974 MAGNETIC NORTH
DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET



1068

BA-~~1068~~

HOUSE, 408 RAILROAD AVENUE

BALTIMORE COUNTY, MD

TRAILERIES

10/2001

MD-SHPD

SOUTHWEST CORNER

1 of 3



BA - 1068
~~1069~~

HOUSE, 408 RAILROAD AVENUE

BALTIMORE COUNTY, MD

TRACERIES

10/2001

MD-SHPO

NORTHWEST CORNER

2 of 3



1068

BA-~~1068~~

HOUSE, 408 RAILROAD AVENUE

BALTIMORE COUNTY, MD

TRAILERIES

10/2001

MD-SH70

EAST ELEVATION

3 of 3

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Herbert Rosen House II

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

408 Railroad Avenue

2nd

CITY, TOWN

Towson,

VICINITY OF

Baltimore County

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT

☐ BUILDING(S)

☒ STRUCTURE

☐ SITE

☐ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

☐ PUBLIC

☒ PRIVATE

☐ BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS

☐ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED

☐ UNOCCUPIED

☐ WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

☐ YES: RESTRICTED

☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED

☐ NO

PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE

☐ COMMERCIAL

☐ EDUCATIONAL

☐ ENTERTAINMENT

☐ GOVERNMENT

☐ INDUSTRIAL

☐ MILITARY

☐ MUSEUM

☐ PARK

☒ PRIVATE RESIDENCE

☐ RELIGIOUS

☐ SCIENTIFIC

☐ TRANSPORTATION

☐ OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Herbert H. Rosen

Telephone #: 667-6800

STREET & NUMBER

1107 York Road

CITY, TOWN

Towson

VICINITY OF

Maryland

STATE, zip code

21204

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Baltimore County Courthouse

Liber #: 4944

Folio #: 456

STREET & NUMBER

401 Bosley Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Towson, Maryland

21204

STATE

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

BA-1068 - 408 Railroad

before 1898

The roof of this two-story frame house is accented by a tiny cross-gable. The houses is three bays wide by one bay deep. Followed by a one-story addition. A porch crosses the street facade.

7 DESCRIPTION

BA-1068

CONDITION☐ EXCELLENT☒ GOOD☐ FAIR☐ DETERIORATED☐ RUINS☐ UNEXPOSED**CHECK ONE**☒ UNALTERED☐ ALTERED**CHECK ONE**☐ ORIGINAL SITE☐ MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

408 RR (pre-1898) Ruby Kenton

This two-story frame house may be the one which appears on an 1898 map of Towson. ~~It is of Towson.~~ It is three bays deep, with a one-bay deep, one-story shed-roofed addition across the rear, or east, side. The house has a north-south gable roof paralleling the street. A tiny cross gable lit by a six-pane window projects from the west side of the roof.

The main block of the house is divided into a stair hall on the north and a parlor to the south. A small square newel, followed by rectangular balusters, rises at the foot of the stairs. The stair turns in the northeast corner after a straight run of steps. The parlor is lit by two 1/1 windows on the west and one 2/2 window on the south. A door at the north end of the west side leads to the stair hall. The second floor is lit by two widely spaced windows on the west and one on the south. A shed-roofed porch with turned posts crosses the west, or street side of the house. The gables of the house are sheathed in white asbestos shingles while the rest of the house is covered with red asphalt shingles imitating brick.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

PERIOD

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Early Deeds indicate that John Yellot conveyed this property to Francis Hines on June 28, 1886. Francis Hines later conveyed the property to John Finn (By lease in 1897). Francis Hines later sold the property to Kenny Bond and wife in 1900. Kenny Bond conveyed the property to CRB Inc. CRB inc. conveyed the property to the present owner Herbert Rosen.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Marcus Pollock - Co-ordinator

Merry Stinson - Architect

ORGANIZATION

Committee to Save E. Towson

DATE

July, 1977

STREET & NUMBER

600 W. Chesapeake Avenue

TELEPHONE

823-8870

CITY OR TOWN

Towson, Maryland 21204

STATE

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 267-1438



BA-1068
Herbert Rosen House
408 R.R. Ave.
Towson, Md.
west

Merry Stinson
1977